

## Into India: *Solidarity* at its best

**In 1951, six young Australian Jesuits answered the call of the Father General of the Society of Jesus and set sail to India to establish a foreign mission. During the 1950s and 1960s, a further 50 Jesuits from Australia and New Zealand (mostly in their early 20s, some not yet fully fledged priests) joined this young mission. Many believed they would never see family or friends again.**

These young missionaries were inspired by Jesus and the life of Ignatius to travel to the frontiers of our world, walking alongside the poor and vulnerable. They were courageous, faith-filled and pioneering; they have left an indelible mark on hundreds of thousands of individuals and communities across India, enhancing their lives.

I had the privilege of spending two weeks visiting Jesuit works in Hazaribag earlier this year, and witnessed the extraordinary achievements of the past 66 years. Today, the Hazaribag mission has 180 Jesuits (including 10 Australians and one New Zealander). In partnership with dozens of

religious congregations and hundreds of lay collaborators, the Jesuits serve some of India's most vulnerable communities, including the Santali and Dalits, through a diverse range of social, pastoral, health and educational works.

But this mission was not created alone. Our family of Jesuit supporters and companions across Australia have been its life-blood over the past six decades. You are crucial co-missionaries: your prayers, financial generosity, letters of encouragement, mission visits and organisation of countless fundraising events and appeals have developed, nurtured and sustained this mission.

Through your generosity and international solidarity, 27,000 young people are being educated every year in more than 65 Jesuit primary, secondary and tertiary education institutions and in village-based learning centres. Strong and faithful parish communities have been formed in Hazaribag. Villagers are participating in micro-credit and financial literacy programs. Women are empowered to take leadership

roles in village initiatives, and families better understand the value of education for their children.

While our brothers and sisters in Hazaribag, through the work of the Jesuits and your generous support, are being given opportunities to live fuller and free lives, there is still much more to be done not only in India but also in other parts of the world. We share more of our Jesuit partners' inspiring work in this edition of Jesuit Mission News.

**Thank you.**  
**Helen Forde, CEO, Jesuit Mission**



Helen Forde, Jesuit Mission's CEO, visiting the Jesuit-run Teacher Training centre in Sitagarha, India.

## *Disturbing the Dust:* Receiving more than we give

**Fr Tony Herbert SJ is currently collaborating with Jesuit Mission on the publication of his second book, *Disturbing the Dust*. Since 1965 he has been living and working in India among some of the world's most marginalised people; this book shares his personal reflections on his experiences and challenges of moving among communities of people on the edges of society.**

Fr Tony notes: "These pages reflect an experience of the human spirit unfolding in

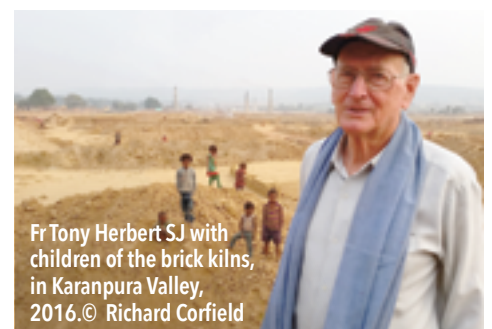
the villages of the indigenous people, and the song we tried to sing together. This experience generated feelings and insights that have been rich beyond measure."

The book's title came to Fr Tony when he realised how much he was learning from those whose world he entered. "I receive more than I give, disturbing the dust of my own ignorance and complacency."

In *Disturbing the Dust*, Fr Tony invites you to experience "the pleasure of living relationships in a living community of people on the edges; the energy, the vision, the wisdom which those people inspire; the challenge of creatively addressing their social problems; the joy in

discovering a new depth in the meaning of the Gospel, and in discovering the myriad faces of God."

**Books will be on sale from late August - visit our website or contact us.**



Fr Tony Herbert SJ with children of the brick kilns, in Karanpura Valley, 2016. © Richard Corfield



Romona, front right, at her evening class

## You can create a *Joyful* world

**Most families living in Thingangyun township in Myanmar are poor, and face discrimination due to their tribal group or ethnic background. Romona, 21, grew up in Rakhine State, where political, ethnic and religious tensions and conflict have paralysed the lives and futures of hundreds of thousands of people. Now living in Thingangyun, her family is very vulnerable; they have no identity papers, and this prevents them from living full and free lives.**

Romona has experienced and witnessed more violence and tragedy in her young life than anyone should in a lifetime. But she saw the opportunity to join the Jesuit-run Oxon English Language Institute in Thingangyun as a new beginning. The school, which started in 2010, provides ninety 17–30-year-olds annually with English language programs in three levels. And more: with support from Jesuit Mission and our Australian Jesuit family, the Jesuits in Myanmar have created a holistic education program that develops the whole person, forming confident leaders, and men and women for others. The school supports students to grow in confidence, self-esteem, knowledge and skills through social development, drama, life skills and pastoral care activities.

Since she joined the program, Romona has developed a new passion for life. The school has exceeded her expectations – she has learnt so much more than English. Her favourite class is the life-skills course, which has given her confidence and is supporting her on a healing journey. Myanmar's Jesuit Socius, Fr Vinny Joseph SJ, teaches Romona's evening class.

He addresses his students: "I respond to you from my heart with a few drops of tears..."

As a human being you are called to live a joyful, peaceful, happy life... I would like to give all of you peace, joy and love. But God has created it in such a way that it can't be given by another person. It has to be created by you. So we are like an instrument. We are like a fire creating the fire... You are assured that you can create a better world, you can create a joyful world; you can make yourself and the community much, much better."

The Jesuits are the only major organisation serving and accompanying the most marginalised families in Thingangyun's slum area. Existing projects include shelter construction, providing welcoming learning and study environments, and improving access to quality education. They are also expanding into microcredit loans and opening a community college.

**"As a human being you are all called to live a joyful, peaceful, happy life... I would like to give all of you peace, joy and love... It has to be created by you."**

Fr Vinny Joseph SJ

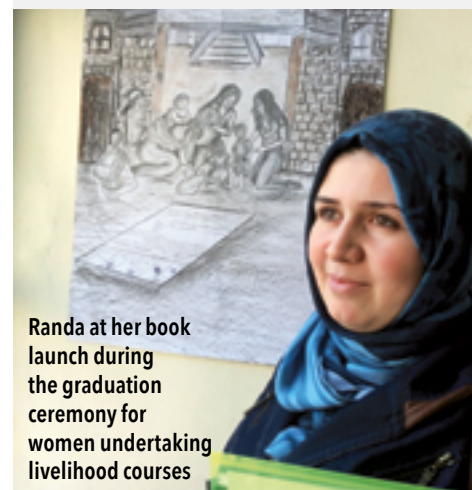
## A symbol of *strength* and *hope*

Randa is from Syria. Once a refugee, she now has a home in Baalbek, Lebanon. Randa describes 11 April 2017 as the happiest day of her life, when she launched her book at the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Social Education Centre in Baalbek. The book launch was part of a graduation ceremony, where 53 women received certificates for successfully completing a JRS course in English, computer literacy or make-up.

The courses have transformed the graduates' lives. Randa's story, "Arragheef Alyabes" ("The Dry Bread"), recounts the suffering and deprivation she and her family, like many others in Syria, have experienced. This story for children aims to create awareness of displacement, and the understanding that food is a basic right for everyone.

For more than a year Randa has been associated with JRS, which runs programs in 50 countries, assisting asylum seekers and refugees with education, emergency assistance, healthcare, livelihood activities and social services. Jesuit Mission is currently supporting JRS Lebanon in educating Syrian refugees in Baalbek.

Randa has successfully completed both the computer and English courses, and her sons have been able to access academic coaching. She has inspired many others. Nada El Myr, Project Director of JRS Baalbek, says: "Randa symbolises, for all of us, strength and hope. A great example of a woman who achieves her goals, in spite of much difficulty and suffering. Someone who is helping make this world a better place."



Randa at her book launch during the graduation ceremony for women undertaking livelihood courses



# A centre for building friendships and lives

In April, a new Pastoral Centre to serve poor displaced families opened in Da Nang, Vietnam. The solidarity of our community of supporters, made it possible for Jesuit Mission to assist with funding the centre's construction and furnishings. The Centre will provide space for training, activities, social services and pastoral care for over 250 families who have migrated to Da Nang and are living in poverty and struggling with daily life.

At the centre's opening ceremony, Bishop Joseph Dang Duc Ngan (pictured below) said: "This project is the magnificent evidence of commitment of Jesuits to the marginalised people in Da Nang. I wish the pastoral centre will become the common home where the poor enrich their dignity and their relationships through participation in a holistic services program."

His wishes were echoed by Fr Phuc, Chair of Social Ministry Committee of Jesuit Vietnam Province: "The pastoral centre not only offers social services to the poor in need, but also empowers them to improve their quality of life. By raising awareness of human dignity, promoting values and

training in work skills, the project aims to develop the community's human capital."

At the ceremony, both old and young expressed their gratitude and their hopes:

**"This pastoral centre not only helps us to build our friendship, but also helps us to build our life. We learn a lot of good things from here, such as how to work together, how to serve one another ... Many thanks to generous benefactors who donated."**

Miss Tram, 15-year-old project beneficiary

**"I wished to have this project for my poor community for a long time. Today, at the age of 93, my eyes have seen my dream become true... I praise The Lord who has mercy on us. Through this project, my descendants will be helped to change their life thanks to the accompaniment of Jesuits."**

Mr Matthew Bui Van My, oldest beneficiary



Opening ceremony at the Vietnamese Pastoral Centre

An article by Fr Trung Nguyen SJ



From left: Fr Trung Nguyen SJ, Fr Peter Jones SJ, and Fr Brian McCoy, SJ

## Friends of the Lord

**A beautiful phrase the Society of Jesus uses is "friends in the Lord". St Ignatius, his companions, and all Jesuits over the years have seen themselves as friends united by Jesus Christ, sharing a common mission.**

For Jesuit Mission, this friendship also extends to all who work with us, and support us, and to those whom we serve. Being part of the Society of Jesus, Jesuit Mission is part of a great network of friends all over the world.

Jesuit Mission was recently honoured to welcome a friend from afar – Fr Peter Jones SJ, who has been on mission in India for 56 years and came to Melbourne to celebrate his golden jubilee of 50 years as a priest. Fr Brian McCoy SJ, Provincial of the Society of Jesus in Australia, thanked Fr Peter for his generosity, and for helping us all "lift up our gaze, beyond our borders and horizons" toward the women, men and children who are in need of our friendship and support.

Fr Peter and the many Jesuits sent to work outside of Australia represent our spirit of solidarity; they are the bridges of friendship to those people we serve.

Jesus said, "I do not call you servants any longer... I have called you friends". It is such a great joy and blessing to have this multitude of "friends in the Lord."

**Fr Trung Nguyen SJ, Rector, Jesuit Mission**

On 31 July we will celebrate St Ignatius' Day.

## Distance and difference no barrier

Jen Fong, 16 years old, is a Year 11 Sydney student. More than two years ago she began volunteering at our national office, to work towards her Duke of Edinburgh bronze medal.

**"The great thing about working for Jesuit Mission is that there is a variety of work to do ... making presentations, designing event invitations, sorting event materials."**

"Through my volunteering, I have come to understand that Jesuit Mission addresses international community needs by empowering individuals through sustainable and long-term solutions such as education, agricultural and livelihood programs. I have been able to see the full force and impact that Catholic ministries have had in addressing social injustices. The work of ministries like the Jesuits' never allows distance or difference to become a barrier.

I have developed new skills and have been informed about the needs of marginalised communities on a global scale. I have learnt there are integral roles and operations involved in operating a national not-for-profit organisation. And the individuals in the Jesuit Mission office are friendly and great to work with!"

**We thank Jen for all her support.**



Jen Fong in action for Jesuit Mission

## Make a donation

The insert in this newsletter contains a donation form. Your gift will help us to continue working in solidarity with people whose need is greatest. Alternatively you can make a donation online at [jesuitmission.org.au](http://jesuitmission.org.au)

## Community and Solidarity

Volunteers at the Maytime Fair, 6 May 2017.  
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### Thank you

We extend our heartfelt gratitude and sincere thanks to all the volunteers and supporters who dedicated their skills, time, spirit and passion to host events and raise funds for Jesuit Mission over the past few months.

**There are too many people to thank here, but special mention goes to all those involved with:**

– The **Melbourne Golf Day** on 24 March which raised funds for educating Burmese refugees in two camps in Thailand.

– The **66th Maytime Fair on 6 May** at Xavier College in Kew, Melbourne, which was attended by thousands of Victorians.

## Events ahead

### 2017 Indian Bazaar

St Ignatius' College, Riverview, 9 September, 8:30am to 5pm. As always, it promises to be a great day with activities and fun for all ages – but we need your support to make it a success! You can help by:

• **Buying raffle tickets** – The annual Indian Bazaar Car Raffle, supported by the Sydney Old Xaverians, offers great prizes – see the insert in this newsletter. To buy tickets, either complete and return the insert; contact the Jesuit Mission office; or buy online: [www.trybooking.com/QGTB](http://www.trybooking.com/QGTB)

• **Donating to our popular wine auction** – Can you offer a few quality bottles from your cellar? Please deliver to our office in Sydney.

• **Donating bric-a-brac** – Any quality antiques, silver, crystal, jewellery (even broken), or similar goods to donate? Deliver to our office.

Contact Meg Morrison: [engagement@jesuitmission.org.au](mailto:engagement@jesuitmission.org.au)

### Sydney Annual Card Day, St Ignatius' College, Riverview, 26 September

Cost: \$45. Starts 10.30am, with morning tea on arrival, followed by lunch and beverages. Bookings: Meg Morrison [events@jesuitmission.org.au](mailto:events@jesuitmission.org.au) Phone: (02) 8918 4121

### Sydney Golf Day, Manly Golf Course, 27 October.

18 holes of golf, a presentation dinner, and more. Bookings: Meg Morrison, [golfday@jesuitmission.org.au](mailto:golfday@jesuitmission.org.au) Phone: (02) 8918 4121 Online: [www.trybooking.com/QGRX](http://www.trybooking.com/QGRX)

### Parish Appeals

Please look out for a Jesuit Mission Parish Appeal in your State.

**QLD:** 5/6 Aug – St Mark's Parish, Inala, Brisbane

**VIC:** 22/23 July – St Joseph's & Immaculate Conception, Hawthorn  
26/27 Aug – Richmond Catholic Parish of St Ignatius & St James

**SA:** 23/24 Sept – St Ignatius, Norwood  
21/22 Oct – St Aloysius, Sevenhill Church of the Good Shepherd, Riverton St Michael's, Clare



You can read more about us at [jesuitmission.org.au](http://jesuitmission.org.au)



[assistant@jesuitmission.org.au](mailto:assistant@jesuitmission.org.au)



[facebook.com/jesuitmission](https://facebook.com/jesuitmission)



The Ron Dyer Centre, Level 1, 42 Ridge Street, North Sydney 2060



(02) 8918 4109



PO Box 193, North Sydney 2059